

## **Historical Museum Study Committee**

Meeting of March 17, 2015

Attending: Bill Moonan, Chair; Gaye Carpenter, Linda Christen, Angelo Colao, Kara Kerwin, Chris Weisz and Carol Amick, representing Frank Gicca for the Bedford Historical Society.

Absent: Mike Rosenberg.

Also in attendance: Bedford resident Jan van Steenwijk.

Minutes of Jan. 13, 2015, as corrected: Approved on a motion by Angelo Colao, seconded by Chris Weisz.

Minutes of Feb. 25, 2015: Approved on a motion by Mr. Weisz, seconded by Linda Christen.

Review available written reports. Chair Bill Moonan distributed a draft Regional Museum Comparison report prepared by Gaye Carpenter, and thanked her for her work. Carol Amick noted that some of the criteria listed in Ms. Carpenter's report were not contained in the Historical Society's report to the committee, but may have been discussed by committee members during their meetings. Mr. Moonan said that this report is a first draft, and corrections will be made in the next version.

Linda Christen distributed a report identifying physical attributes (property value, building age, type of construction, roofing type, HVAC, restrooms, and "finished" and "gross" square footage) for 9 of the 14 sites ranked through the Pair-Wise comparison (Ranked Sites). Chair Moonan thanked her for her work, noted that the square footage for the Town Hall's Multi-Purpose room is 2,774 for 1 floor and up to 5,548 if a second floor were built, and said that the missing information for the remaining Ranked Sites would be compiled as the committee continues its work.

Chris Weisz, who had volunteered to draft Sections 2-7 of the report, said that he did not have a first draft yet, but was working on it. He summarized the committee's charge, and said that he needed a digital version of the Pair-Wise ranking to include in the report. He also said that the appendices would include: (1) meeting minutes; (2) the report from the Historical Society and (3) the committee's group analysis spreadsheet evaluation of surrounding town museums.

Mr. Moonan thanked him for his work to date. Mr. Colao commented that there is one generic thing that all the committee members have discussed – that most of the museums investigated have only a small number of people who come each week. Mr. Weisz said this issue is being addressed under "museum operations."

Mr. Colao added his feeling that ease of access to a museum is an important factor, and suggested that, when the Fire or Police station locations are listed in the report, a comment should be included about a museum working in conjunction with an expansion of those facilities. Mr. Weisz said that comment would be included.

Continued discussion of the committee's "charge" as elements of the Committee Report. Chair Moonan presented a flip chart marked with physical attributes of the Ranked Sites. Before the start of the meeting, he had inserted the square footage of each site. Then he asked committee members whether

the other attributes existed, or not. Each attribute that existed received a checkmark (✓); where the committee felt it did not exist, it received an “x” or other comment, as follows:

Fire Station:

- Square footage: 9,418
- ADA accessible: ✓
- Security: ✓
- Central location: ✓
- Town owned: ✓
- Parking: ✓
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: Assuming Fire Department moves, lease unused space.
- Public transportation: ✓

New 2-story addition at Town Center:

- Square footage: Build to suit
- ADA accessible: ✓
- Security: ✓
- Central location: ✓
- Town owned: ✓
- Parking: ✓
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: ✓
- Public transportation: ✓

Comments: Ms. Christen asked if such new construction would qualify for CPA funds.

Brown property: Skipped.

Comments: Ms. Amick noted that the Domine Manse at 110 The Great Rd. is not owned by Nat Brown, but is in a trust owned by Mr. Brown’s children. She wondered how many of the numerous other Brown properties are also in such trusts.

Police Station:

- Square footage: Build to suit
- ADA accessible: ✓
- Security: ✓
- Central location: ✓
- Town owned: ✓
- Parking: ✓
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: ✓
- Public transportation: ✓

Comments: Ms. Christen noted that both the Police and Fire Stations are close to restaurants.

Multi-Purpose Room, Town Hall:

- Square footage: 2,774 (1 floor) and up to 5,548 (2 floor)
- ADA accessible: ✓

- Security: ✓
- Central location: ✓
- Town owned: ✓
- Parking: ✓
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: ✓
- Public transportation: ✓

Comments: Jan van Steenwijk expressed concern about Mike Rosenberg's recent suggestion that the Multi-Purpose Room could be a "temporary" museum, with exhibits in cases along the walls. Ms. Amick commented that, in her opinion, if a temporary museum like this were established, a permanent museum for all of the artifacts would likely never happen. Ms. Christen felt it is a "big plus" that it might be the cheapest solution. Mr. van Steenwijk felt that, with occasional need to use this room for "overflow" from Selectmen's meetings, the Multi-Purpose Room was not a good choice. Chair Moonan said that his idea for this space would be to build a fairly large "mezzanine" second floor – that would not be a "full" second floor but would have an elevator stop, with permanent exhibits and office space housed on that new floor, and some "movable" exhibits on the first floor so there would still be enough room to seat an "overflow" crowd.

#### Old Town Hall:

- Square footage: 2,100 per each of 3 floors (including basement)
- ADA accessible: ✓
- Security: ?
- Central location: ✓
- Town owned: ✓
- Parking: poor
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: ✓
- Public transportation: ✓

Comments: Chair Moonan said the committee needed to check the sprinklers at Old Town Hall. Regarding parking, he noted that the Santander Bank allows the use of their parking lot.

Daugherty property: Skipped.

Comments: Ms. Amick suggested that the Daugherty property should be included in the report, since the committee's charge was to assess property that the Town could acquire. Mr. Moonan that Mr. Daugherty was no longer interested in donating the property, but would entertain a bid from the Town to purchase the property.

#### Lot across from Bikeway Source (1 Railroad Ave.):

- Square footage: Build to suit
- ADA accessible: ✓
- Security: ✓
- Central location: X (at end of bike path)
- Town owned: ✓
- Parking: ✓
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: X
- Public transportation: ✓

Comments: Chair Moonan noted that the parking spaces behind Ken Larson's Bikeway Source building could be used for a new museum at 1 Railroad Ave.

New Building at Job Lane House:

- Square footage: Build to suit
- ADA accessible: ? (Would a building that far from police be as safe, despite a state-of-the art system?)
- Security: √
- Central location: X
- Town owned: ? (need to create)
- Parking: √
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: X
- Public transportation: X

Comments: Kara Kerwin noted that a new building at the Job Lane property would add to the existing historic building on that site. Ms. Christen noted that a museum at this location would serve as an incentive to bring more traffic to the Job Lane House. Mr. van Steenwijk felt that school children could not get to the Job Lane site. Ms. Kerwin said that the third graders currently come from the Lane School.

Joshua Page House, 13 School Ave. (Lorrie Dunham):

- Square footage: 1,800 (Check this as gross area is 2,788)
- ADA accessible: X
- Security: X (install)
- Central location: √
- Town owned: not yet
- Parking: √
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: X
- Public transportation: √

Comments: Ms. Christen wondered if a small addition could be added to the back of the Joshua Page House to increase the square footage. Mr. Moonan reported on his arrangements for the committee members to see the Rufus Porter murals in this house on two tour dates: March 21 or April 11.

Passenger Depot:

- Square footage: 1,296 per floor (gross; stairs not subtracted)
- ADA accessible: 1<sup>st</sup> floor only
- Security: ?
- Central location: X (at end of bike path)
- Town owned: √
- Parking: √
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: X
- Public transportation: √

Town Center 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor:

- Square footage:
- ADA accessible: √

- Security: ✓
- Central location: ✓
- Town owned: ✓
- Parking: ✓
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: ✓
- Public transportation: ✓

George Swallow House (20 South Rd.):

- Square footage:
- ADA accessible:
- Security:
- Central location: ✓
- Town owned:
- Parking: Poor
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others:
- Public transportation: ✓

VFW Building, 76 Loomis St.:

- Square footage: 1,344
- ADA accessible: ✓
- Security: ?
- Central location: X (at end of bike path)
- Town owned: X
- Parking: ?
- Part of an existing bldg, occupied by others: X
- Public transportation: ✓

Comments: Chair Moonan said the committee needs to check the number of parking spaces available.

Next the committee conducted a group analysis of the “pros” and “cons” of the Ranked Sites, keeping in mind the perceived desires of the Historical Society. The “pros” and “cons” were identified as followed:

Fire Station \_\_\_\_\_:

Pros:

- In good condition
- Assuming that the Fire Department is relocated and the whole building is available, excess space could be leased.
- Big open space for meetings and exhibits.
- Has bathrooms and kitchen.
- CPA funds possible.

Cons:

- Limited on-site parking. (Check # of spaces.)
- Currently occupied.
- When available? 5-10 years?

New 2-story addition at Town Center :

Pros:

- Design to suit.
- Existing building has bathrooms and kitchen.

Cons:

- Expense of building new.
- CPA funds not available for new construction.
- 5-10 year horizon?

Police Station :

Pros:

- Previous site by Historical Society museum (voted by Town Meeting years ago).

Cons:

- Expense of building new.
- CPA funds not available for new construction.
- 5-10 year horizon?
- Public won't want to enter via police station.
- No bathrooms or kitchen.

Multi-Purpose Room :

Pros:

- Short time frame for conversion.
- Adding second floor provides enough space to meet Historical Society requirements.
- Existing building has bathrooms and kitchen (break room).
- CPA funds would be available for renovations.

Cons:

- Expense of building a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor mezzanine addition.
- Changed use by large groups.
- Risk of no 2<sup>nd</sup> floor addition.

Old Town Hall :

Pros:

- Large 3<sup>rd</sup> floor room.
- Bathrooms and kitchen.
- CPA funds would be available.

Cons:

- Limited on-site parking.
- Must relocate existing tenants (possible loss of income to town).
- If all tenants are moved, no one in building.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> floor not highly visible.

Lot across from Bikeway Source (1 Railroad ave.) :

Pros:

- At end of bike path, which is largest tourist destination in town.

Cons:

- Expense of building new.
- Parking only across the street, behind Hanson building.

New Building at Job Lane :

Pros:

- Might increase visitor traffic to Job Lane House.
- Walking distance to Lane School.

Cons:

- Expense of building new.
- No CPA funds would be available

Joshua Page House (Lorrie Dunham) :

Pros:

- Rufus Porter murals.
- CPA funds would be available.
- Could be part of a history complex (with Fire Station or Multi-Purpose Room as main museum).
- Would save an historic house.

Cons:

- Need \$ to purchase and rehab.
- Small for stand-alone museum.
- No meeting space.

Passenger Depot :

Pros:

- Close to high tourist location (bike path).
- Bathroom.

Cons:

- Relocation of current tenants would mean loss of rent to town.
- Smaller than space needed by Historical Society.
- Expense of rehabbing for museum use.

Town Center 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor :

Pros:

- Bathrooms and kitchen.
- CPA funds would be available for rehab.

Cons:

- Expense of relocating HVAC equipment.
- Expense of rehabbing for museum use.
- Visibility to public poor (3<sup>rd</sup> floor).

George Swallow House :

Pros:

- Good in combination with Old Town Hall.
- Would provide space for additional OTH parking in rear.
- OTH occupants could be relocated to this house, freeing up OTH.
- Save an historic house.
- CPA funds would be available.

Cons:

- Expense of rehabbing.
- Small for stand-alone museum.

VFW Building :

Pros:

- In location of large tourist attraction (bike path).
- Bathrooms and kitchen.

Cons:

- Very small for stand-alone museum.
- Expense of renovating and enlarging the building.

New business: review of draft news article. Chair Moonan circulated a draft article requesting private property owners potentially interested in donating or selling their property to the town for a museum to contact the committee. The committee suggested including Mr. Rosenberg's name along with Mr. Moonan for contact purposes.

Next meeting: Tentatively Tuesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, but if not that date, then April 20, 7:30 PM in the Town Hall's 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room.

Adjourn: Mr. Weisz moved to adjourn; Ms. Carpenter seconded the motion, and the committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:35 pm.